

Sugino et al. (U. S. Patent 5,590,732). The Office Action also rejected claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2000-296780. Claims remain pending in the present application, and reconsideration of those claims is respectfully requested.

### **Discussion of Claim Rejections**

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for at least the reasons set forth below.

1. In re Bugosh, as noted by the Office Action, the pivot is used. However, the claimed invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 5 and referring to drawings, the fitting surface is formed by the peripheral surface of the nut in the axial middle region. The present invention is clearly not using the pivot mechanism. It is believed that the claimed invention has precluded the pivotability, and therefore is distinguishable over Bugosh.

From the other point of view, the member 82 of Bugosh has the taper shape, which is used to easily support the pivot balls 70 and 98.

However, the present invention can control the size of the nut to fit to the supporting member.

The claimed invention is indeed distinguishable over Bugosh.

2. In re Sugino (Fig. 6; col. 5, lines 45-58), the nut 51 needs the ball return passage 52. In Sugino, the middle protruding portion is used to allow the balls 17 to be circulated back to the screw groove 17 after the nut 51 has made three revolution around the rack shaft 3.

Clearly, the protruding portion of the nut 51 is also necessary to have at least the thickness of the ball diameter to form the ball return passage.

In the invention, the non-fitting region 14b (page 9, line 28 – page 10, line 23) is not the same as Sugino.

In addition, the present invention has positively used that the inner diameter surface of the elevating screw nut is reduced and the effective diameter is reduced by allowing the outside diameter to fit to the housing.

That is, it is at least a purport of the present invention that when moment load or misalignment is exerted across shaft and nut, if the effective diameter is made larger than that at the center, that is, if a large clearance is provided, in order to reduce the load applied both ends of the nut, it is possible to alleviate the prying force. And, it is therefore possible to reduce torque fluctuation and improve the durability.

The claimed invention recited in claims 1 and 5 has also precluded the design of Sugino with the ball return passage.

3. In re JP 2000-296780 (hereinafter JP'780), a tapered shape is disclosed. However, the tapered shape of JP'780 is used to facilitate the insertion of the support bearing which is inserted in the outside diameter, and no consideration is given to clearance inside the nut.

In addition, the middle region of the nut is not fit to the supporting member.

Therefore, the claimed invention as recited in independent claims 1 and 5 is different from the JP'780.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1

and 5 patently define over the prior art references, and should be allowed. For at least the same reasons, dependent claims 2-4 and 6-11 patently define over the prior art references as well.

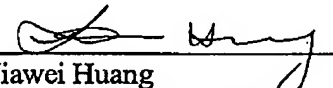
### CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that all the pending claims 1-11 the invention patently define over the prior art and are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

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